

2009/2010
Shasta County
Grand Jury Final Report

All these measures have a harmful effect on the Sheriff's Office ability to provide comprehensive public safety services to the citizens of Shasta County; however, the Sheriff and his staff had to address this fiscal reality.

Closing a floor of the jail was arguably the most controversial action taken by the Sheriff - an action that drew criticism from both the general public and county officials. However, after examining the Sheriff's Office budget data, the Grand Jury found that closing a floor of the jail enabled the Sheriff to reduce his budget by nearly \$2 million, while still maintaining minimum patrol service levels through transfers and reassignments. Any other course of action would have resulted in additional personnel reductions in enforcement units, an unacceptable course of action since the Sheriff's Office was already down 21 positions.

Shasta County Justice Center – Main jail

On October 16, 2009, the Grand Jury conducted its annual site visit and inspection of the Shasta County Jail. This inspection included the in-take processing area, holding cells, laundry, kitchen, law library, and inmate housing areas.

The Grand Jury members talked to several male inmates as to their general welfare and treatment by the jail's staff. Those interviewed had no complaints, adding that the staff treated them with respect. The inmates were appreciative of the newly installed commissary computer system that allows them to make commissary purchases, automatically deducted from their personal accounts, in a timely and efficient manner.

The jail was found to be clean and adequately staffed. Appropriate security measures were in place to ensure the safety of the staff and inmates.

Sugar Pine Conservation Camp

Driving east along Highway 299 about 30 miles outside of Redding, tucked back in the hills surrounded by ranchettes, you'll find Sugar Pine Conservation Camp #9, a California Department of Fire (Cal Fire) and California Department of Corrections facility. The camp is a minimum-security facility that may house as many as 120 trustee inmates during peak fire season. The camp's primary mission is to provide a work force for statewide wildfire suppression. During off-season, the camp maintains at least an 85% crew strength, including three fire crews. Each fire crew consists of one Cal Fire Captain and 15 inmate firefighters. During peak fire season as many as seven crews are maintained.

Being selected and assigned to Sugar Pine Conservation Camp is, in fact, a reward for an inmate. Inmates are selected from the High Desert State Prison near Susanville and must have less than one year remaining on their sentences. Only inmates who are serving sentences for non-violent crimes may participate. Once assigned to the camp, any inmate violating camp rules is immediately returned to prison.

When not fighting a fire, crews are used to clear firebreaks throughout the Shasta County area. During normal day-to-day operations, crews are housed in dormitories, fed in the mess hall, and work in the various shops repairing and maintaining vehicles and equipment. During times when crews respond to wild fires, they may be housed in tent cities at forward staging areas near the fire. Inmates are assigned to and trained for specific jobs. In many cases, this learned skill is beneficial to the inmate as they transition back into society. Off-duty time may be spent learning new skills such as cabinet making for other state agencies.

Overall, the facility and equipment were well maintained. Dormitories, shops, and mess hall were clean and well organized.

Shasta County Juvenile Hall

Built more than half a century ago, the Shasta County Juvenile Hall was designed to hold approximately 50 juveniles. Today, the facility averages 30 to 35 juveniles with an average stay of seventeen days. Twenty full-time staff members provide supervision 24/7.

The Grand Jury's tour included the entire facility from the in-take area to classrooms. To insure that the juveniles' education is not interrupted, they are required to attend classes during incarceration. The school is staffed by a part-time principal, two credentialed teachers, and three teacher's aides. The curriculum follows the State of California curriculum guidelines.

Jurors also toured the high security wing and the medical facility. At times, high security offenders are co-mingled with other juveniles, with appropriate supervision. A closed-circuit television system allows officers and support personnel to observe the juveniles in public areas.

California Forensic Medical Group (CFMG), under contract with Shasta County, provides urgent medical and dental care for the detainees. Each week a nurse is on site five days and a physician two days. On-call medical assistance is available 24 hours a day, including weekends. In addition, Shasta County Mental Health provides counseling. Jurors expressed concern with confidentiality and effectiveness of counseling time since an employee must be present with the juvenile being counseled.

The food services supervisor is also the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) supervisor. Currently lessons are focused on developing menus and learning proper cleaning techniques. Eventually, the food supervisor plans to establish a similar catering program such as the one that existed at Crystal Creek Regional Boys' Camp. While medical adjustments are made to detainees' diets, vegetarian or religious choices are not offered.

The jurors toured the outside recreation areas, including a field that had been used for gardening and is being considered as part of the facility's planned expansion.
